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# KULU AND KANGRA



*Issued on behalf of*

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A view of the Kulu valley with the river Beas flowing through it

## CHAPTER I

### KULU AND KANGRA

#### PHYSICAL FEATURES

The region comprising the Kangra and Kulu valleys is an L-shaped territory, the 'L' lying on its back and forming the northern portion of the Punjab State. The Kangra valley, which is the longer arm, runs from west to east in gradually rising terrain between parallel mountain ranges. The shorter arm comprising the Kulu valley lies

nestling in the heart of the mid-Himalayas and gives access to the high snow-covered ranges, beyond which lie the wild and barren but magnificent high Himalayas and the valleys of Spiti and Lahoul.

For a real holiday away from the stresses and strains of town life, no place is better designed than these valleys to rest and recuperate the tired nerves of the brain worker, to whet his appetite for beauty and to initiate him into the delight of holding communion with Nature.

### KANGRA

This is how a British visitor, writing a hundred years ago, expressed the impact of Kangra on his senses :

“No scenery, in my opinion, presents such sublime and delightful contrasts. Below, lies the plain, a picture of rural loveliness and repose; the surface is covered with the richest cultivation, irrigated by streams which descend from perennial snows, and interspersed with homesteads buried in the midst of groves and fruit trees. Turning from this scene of peaceful beauty, the stern and majestic hills confront us; their sides are furrowed with precipitous water-courses; forests of oak clothe their flanks, and higher up, give place to gloomy and funereal pines; above all are wastes of snow or pyramidal masses of granite too perpendicular for the snow to rest on.”

The contour of the Kangra valley is pleasantly broken by a number of transverse ridges and mountain streams. The altitude varies between 2,000 ft. and 4,000 ft. The visitor travels along a stretch of level road running through green fields and picturesque hamlets. Suddenly he ascends the flank of a steep ridge. Pausing half way up the hillside, he looks back and the arresting beauty of the valley below

him takes possession of him. He can hardly believe that what gave so much pleasure at close quarters can be equally delightful as a distant view. He gazes at this feast of beauty, reluctant to leave it and proceeds further. At last after a long and lingering look he turns his back on it, and continues his journey. The experience repeats itself. After crossing the ridge there is another level and delightful stretch and then another ridge providing him with a glorious viewpoint. There is yet another and third repetition of the phenomenon before the valley ends and the road goes winding down to the charming old town of Mandi and a beautiful drive of twenty-five miles through the narrow gorge of the Beas river. At Aut the gorge opens out and the Kulu valley begins. This extends as far as Koti, fifty miles further north.

### KULU

Of the Kulu valley it is difficult to speak without superlatives. The width of the valley is seldom more than a mile, and at any spot along its entire length of fifty miles the eye takes in the scene between the two mountain ranges as one complete and fascinating picture. The river Beas, beginning as a fast mountain stream near Koti, spreads out and slows down near Katrain, Kulu and Bajaura, and again narrows to become a fierce and awe-inspiring torrent at Aut.

The valley changes its appearance and complexion with each change of season. It is difficult to say what is the best time to visit Kulu, but it is perhaps in spring that the valley shows to best advantage. Early in March the apricot trees, dotted among the fields, burst into pink blossom, and look like fairy sprays of leafless bouquets. The medlars

are crowned with white flowers among fresh green foliage. On the higher slopes, the giant rhododendrons with their crimson flowers begin to look like trees decorated with myriads of red electric bulbs. Nearer the river, the scarlet clusters of the sumach are ablaze among the fields. In the fruit orchards all along the valley, the cherry and peach blossoms stand out like splashes of bright colour painted across the mountainscape by some gay artist sent down by the gods and bringing with him the gifts of joy and beauty. Early in June, the flambeaux of horse-chestnuts, with millions of bees humming about them, present an unforgettable sight. At the same time the wheat and barley fields change from a deep green to a golden yellow. A little later, with the advent of monsoon, the rice fields are covered with pale green velvety carpets cut into the delightful shapes which the peculiar slope of the hillside imposes upon them. The sky is the playground of masses of white-grey clouds which obscure the mountain tops. In September the blue skies return once again; fields and forests show wonderful tints of crimson and gold, of ripened grain and flaming creepers, embroidered into the evergreen foliage of firs and deodars. In winter the whole valley lies under a mantle of snow. The dazzling beauty of sun on virgin snow, the green branches of conifer trees crazily sloping down with the weight of snow upon them, and long crystal rods of icicles hanging in shady places are things which add a new dimension to the mind. And then once again comes spring with its light-hearted joy and its raiment of variegated colours.

#### FLORAL WEALTH

The Kulu valley has an abundance of wild flowers.

A Kulu belle





In the lower reaches masses of blue and purple iris are splashed over the hillside in June and July. Buttercups, daisies and anemones add a variety of colour. Wild rose, crocus, lily of the field, sorrel and a host of other flowering plants make walking in the valley an unforgettable pleasure. The upper pastures where the shepherds and cowherds take their animals for grazing in the months of June, July and August present a tapestry of colour and gaiety. Kaisdhar and Chanderkhani, the grassy downs near the Hamta *nala* and the upper slopes of the Rohtang Pass are carpeted with a profusion of flowers. There you will find buttercups of several colours ranging from the familiar golden yellow to pink red and the colour of bright flame. Primulas and verbena, ranunculus, wild strawberry, geranium, dog-violets, bluebells and occasionally a blue poppy are seen during the summer months. The slopes below the Chanderkhani Pass are covered with innumerable clumps of dwarf rhododendrons which are in bloom in the month of July. The white, pink and mauve flowers present a scene of incomparable loveliness.

There are several tea gardens in the Kangra valley and the tea grown is of a high quality. Formerly the planters specialised in the manufacture of green tea which found a ready market in Afghanistan; but now, due to transport and other difficulties, the export of green tea has decreased considerably and the planters are turning their attention to the processing of black tea. The results are very promising and some of the gardens are producing black tea of an excellent aroma and flavour. A visit to one of the numerous tea gardens is very rewarding, and if previous intimation is sent to the manager of the estate, he will be glad to show the visitor round.



Dussehra fair in Kulu

In Kulu, fruit farming is the major industry and the fruit grown is of the finest quality. Kulu apples have made a name for themselves throughout the country, the best-known varieties being Red Delicious, Golden and Cox's Orange Pippin. The fruit is large in size, and better in taste and flavour than most foreign apples. The early varieties ripen in August and the late varieties in October. Pears of excellent quality are plentiful, and in July and August when the market is flooded with them you can buy 8 lb. for a rupee. The price in the gardens is a little more than a rupee a maund (82 lb.). Cherries, apricots, plums, and peaches are available in abundance during the months of June and July, and in October, persimmons. Walnuts and chestnuts grow everywhere in the valley though the walnuts are not of such good quality as those of Kashmir. Fruit-growing in the Kangra valley has not been very successful because frequent hailstorms, which are a feature of the valley at springtime, destroy the flower and damage the young fruit.

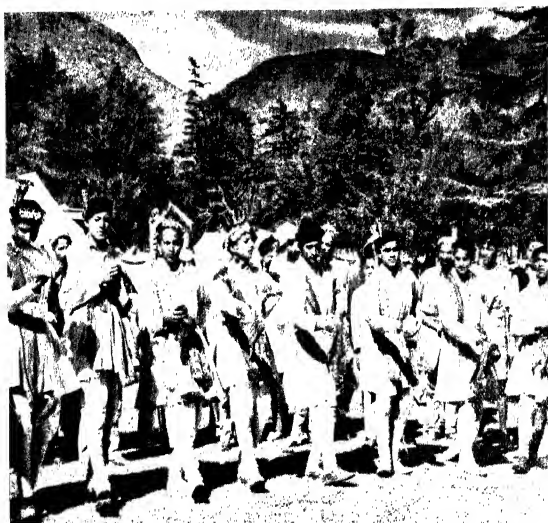
### SPORT

Both Kangra and Kulu provide good sport for the fisherman. The main river which runs through these valleys is the Beas. In the lower reaches Mahseer, Murrel, eel, Singoa, Kail, Pallu and Salo are still plentiful despite extensive and continuous poaching. At Nadhaun and Dera Gopipur, the angler will find that there is still as good fish in the water as ever came out of it. In Kulu there is excellent trout and at Katrain there is a trout hatchery which maintains a good supply in the river. Some of the tributaries of the Beas also have trout. The places recommended are Katrain, Bara Gaon and Larji on the Beas

and Banjar on the Tirthan, a tributary of the Beas. Fishing licences are obtainable locally from the Assistant Warden of Fisheries, Katrain.

For the sportsman there is plenty of big and small game in both Kangra and Kulu. In both valleys pheasant (monal, koklas, kalij, tragopan and chir), several varieties of partridge, wild duck, woodcock, snipe, and pigeon (blue rock, wood and snow) are available. Snow-pheasant and snow-partridge are occasionally shot during winter when they descend to the lower slopes. The shooting

Kulu folk dancers



season opens on September 15 except for pheasant, snow-cock and snow-partridge, for which the opening date is October 1.

Big game comprises brown and black bear, leopard, snow leopard, ibex, bharal, tahr, sarao, gural and barking deer. Shooting licences are obtainable from the Divisional Forest Officer, Kulu. The Tourist Receptionist at Kulu will help the visitor in securing the services of a *shikari* who is familiar with the terrain and the haunts of the animals.

For the trekker and the mountain-climber Kangra and Kulu provide unequalled opportunities. There are numerous easy treks through beautiful forests and along picturesque valleys, with rest-houses and inspection bungalows where the visitor can stay. For the more hardy mountaineer there are many exciting things to do. High passes and lofty mountain peaks lie almost at his doorstep. A brief account of some of these treks will be found in the last chapter of this guide. Riding ponies and packmules are available from government contractors stationed at Buntar and Manali at fixed rates.

### THE PEOPLE

The people of these valleys lead a simple and unsophisticated life. With few needs and fewer worries they are contented with their lot. They are lively and good-tempered, fond of fairs and public assemblies, and have some pretensions to musical taste. Their songs have a simple cadence pleasing even to a cultivated ear. It is a most agreeable experience to hear the womenfolk singing while they work in the fields.

Like most inhabitants of hilly areas they are superstitious and credulous. Whenever any misfortune assails them---whether it be drought or an untimely hailstorm, an



An old woman of Kulu wearing heavy silver ornaments



Shepherd boys from Kangra

unsympathetic official or a domestic sorrow---they seek an antidote by appeasing the particular god whose wrath brought on the trouble.

The comparative remoteness of the Kulu valley has invested it with an atmosphere of spiritual peace which no visitor fails to notice. The look of happy contentment on the people's faces, the gaiety of the womenfolk, the slow tempo of life in the valley and, above all, the sumptuous bounty of nature in providing an abundance of flowers, fruits and forests, all contribute to the enjoyment of a holiday in these valleys.

Women do most of the work in the home as well as outside in the fields—the men reserving to themselves only the job of ploughing. Not that the males are completely idle, for they may be seen spinning wool on small portable spindles. Later, the wool is woven into blankets or tweeds which, though somewhat coarse in appearance, are extremely warm. The handloom tweeds of Kulu are not to be despised even by the sophisticated town-dweller, and Kulu shawls made from *pashmina* wool are much sought after. The shawl industry is being encouraged by the Government and shawls are now exported abroad.

#### MAIN ROUTES TO THE VALLEYS

There are four main routes to the two valleys—two from the plains and two from Simla. The first and the one most commonly followed—because it is an all-weather road and enables the visitor to see the whole of the Kangra valley before he enters Kulu—passes through Pathankot, the broad-gauge railway terminus which is also the starting point of the road journey to Kashmir and to Dalhousie. The overnight railroad journey from Delhi brings the traveller to Pathankot early in the morning. From here comfortable buses run right through the Kangra valley to Mandi and on to Kulu and Manali. Kulu is 176 miles from Pathankot and the bus journey takes the whole day. In a car it is possible to reach Manali, 23 miles beyond Kulu, before nightfall.

Tourists are advised to make bus or car reservations from Pathankot in advance by writing to the local manager, Kulu Valley Transport; the local manager, Himachal Pradesh Government; or the Tourist Receptionist, Punjab Government, Pathankot.





A group of Kangra gaddi shepherds

If you wish to travel all the way by car from Delhi, you can branch off north at Jullundur and proceed *via* Hoshiarpur, Bharwain and Dera Gopipur. The journey involves passing through a *cho* (sandy bed of a monsoon torrent) and crossing the Beas by ferry. This route slows down the traveller and may be found troublesome during rains, but it is shorter by 27 miles and takes the traveller near Jwalamukhi where there is an ancient temple dedicated to the "Goddess of the flaming mouth", and Kangra where there are an old temple and a fort. This way, you will meet the main Kangra valley road, 3 miles beyond

Kangra. At the junction you turn right and continue the journey to Palampur and Mandi.

The third route is a newly constructed fair-weather road connecting Simla with Mandi—a distance of 100 miles. Himachal Government Transport buses run along this road, but the journey is long and tiring. It is preferable to go by a jeep or land-rover, which can cover the distance in about six hours. This route is recommended only if Simla must be included in the tourist's itinerary.

The fourth route is also a fair-weather road from Simla. Travel by car or bus up to Luhri, 66 miles from Simla, and continue the journey by jeep across the suspension bridge over the Sutlej, and passing through Ani and Khanag, cross the Jalori Pass (10,000 ft.). A picturesque path winding through a beautiful pine forest will bring you down to Shoja and Banjar, from where there is a good motor road to Aut and Kulu. This route is practicable only between May 1 and October 31 and, as road breaches are frequent during the monsoon, it is advisable to make enquiries from the Director of Tourism, Himachal Pradesh, Simla, before starting. But if the visitor can spare the time he will be well advised to walk or ride over the middle portion of this route—between Luhri and Banjar. He will thus be saved the thrills and perils of a vehicular journey along what is little more than a bridle-path, and will be able to see some lovely Himalayan scenery. Shoja, just below the Jalori Pass, is well worth a visit. The entire journey to Kulu can be completed in four or five days. The total distance is 133 miles, and of this all but 37 is quite safe for cars and buses.



A view of the Kangra valley from Jogindernagar

## CHAPTER II

### PLACES OF INTEREST

#### PATHANKOT

There is nothing of any interest to the tourist in Pathankot, the starting point of the road journey to the Kangra and Kulu valleys. The town has increased in size and importance since 1947, as it lies on the road and air route to Kashmir. Eight miles from Pathankot on the Kashmir route lies Madhopur, a delightful spot on the river Ravi where the canal headworks are located. The place is well worth a visit and the tourist travelling by car from Delhi will find it convenient to halt there for the

night. Accommodation in one of the rest-houses built by the Irrigation Department can be reserved by writing in advance to the Executive Engineer, P.W.D. (Irrigation), Gurdaspur. With a little effort, arrangements can be made for floating down the river on an improvised raft consisting of an upturned *charpoy* resting on a pair of inflated buffalo skins. This interesting contraption, which is perfectly safe, takes two passengers and is steered by two men who lie on the buffalo skins, half immersed in the icy cold water. With their hands holding on to the upturned legs of the *charpoy*, they work their legs as like rudders and negotiate the raft through rocks and rapids.

### NURPUR

The first important town on the Kangra valley road is Nurpur, 19 miles from Pathankot. Its original name was Dhameri, and it was renamed by the Mughal Emperor Jahangir (whose real name was Nur-ud-Din—the Light of the Faith) either after his own name or in honour of his famous queen, Nur Jahan. Nurpur is a municipal town and the headquarters of a *tehsil* (administrative sub-division of a district). The remains of an old fort built by Raja Basu, nearly a thousand years ago, can be seen from the road.

Nurpur is famous for its wool spinning industry, and shawls made from Nurpur *pashmina* are greatly prized. The industry was started by Kashmiris who fled from their homes in the famine of 1783. It is now in the hands of local residents.

### DIHARAMSALA

The road now gradually climbs and at Shahpur, 21 miles beyond Nurpur, the main Kangra valley begins.

The mountainscape now onwards presents some magnificent views, with the snow-covered Dhauladhar range forming a lofty wall on the left only a few miles away. Forty-eight miles from Pathankot the road branches off to the left for Dharamsala, eight miles away.

Dharamsala, which is the headquarters of Kangra district, lies on a spur of the Dhauladhar in the midst of wild and picturesque scenery at an elevation of 4,500 ft. Upper Dharamsala, where a contingent of the army is stationed, lies a thousand feet higher. The town suffered much damage in the earthquake of 1905, and many of the houses in upper Dharamsala which then collapsed have not been rebuilt. Owing to its heavy rainfall (the highest in the whole of Punjab), it is not a very popular hill station, but it is a delightful spot in spring and autumn. Bhagsunath, with its picturesque waterfall, is a favourite picnic spot within easy walking distance of the town. A little further lies Dal Lake, which is also well worth a visit. There are many pleasant walks in upper Dharamsala and it is possible to make a one-day trip to the snow line below Ilaqa Pass by starting early. There is no good hotel at Dharamsala, but accommodation for tourists is available in the civil rest-house. One of the biggest and most progressive tea estates in the district is situated just below Dharamsala.

### KANGRA

Kangra, like Dharamsala, lies a little off the main route. The road to Kangra branches off to the right. After three miles the visitor arrives at the ancient town, overlooking the Ban Ganga torrent. There are several temples in Kangra, the most famous of them being the shrine dedicated to the goddess Vajreshri, whose gilded cupola is a



A temple in Kangra

conspicuous landmark. In 1009 A.D. the temple was plundered by Sultan Mahmood of Ghazni who carried away treasures valued at millions of rupees. Some 350 years later, the Emperor Firoz Tughlak also plundered the temple. Timurlain, too, was attracted to Kangra by the reported wealth of the temple. In 1398 he marched on Kangra (then called Nagarkot) and defeated the ruler, but it is not recorded if he plundered the temple.

The fort at Kangra, which dates from ancient times, is well worth a visit.

### JWALAMUKHI

Twenty-one miles from Kangra lies the famous temple of Jwalamukhi (the Goddess of the flaming mouth), built picturesquely against a rocky cliff. It lies in the valley of the Beas, amidst some natural jets of combustible gas which are accepted as a manifestation of the goddess. The interior of the temple consists of a square pit about three feet deep with a pathway all round. In the middle, the rock is slightly hollowed out and the gas escaping from a fissure is kept constantly alight by temple priests. There is no idol of any kind and the flaming fissure is believed to be the mouth of the goddess. Jwalamukhi is one of the most popular Hindu temples in northern India, and a big fair is held there in April every year.

A few miles beyond Jwalamukhi lies the Nadham rest-house situated in picturesque surroundings and overlooking the river Beas. It is a lovely place for a quiet weekend. The river provides excellent fishing.

### PALAMPUR

We return once again to the main Kangra valley road

and continue our journey to Palampur, 24 miles beyond the point from where the Kangra and Dharamsala roads branch off. Palampur is a delightful spot surrounded on all sides by tea gardens. The place enjoys a salubrious climate and the pine-scented air is said to have curative properties. There are comfortable rest-houses at Palampur and a luxurious rest-house of the Railway Department four miles from Palampur. The motor road runs through the main street of Palampur which is always crowded with a rich assortment of people including Kangra shepherds with their duffle shirts and cone-shaped caps of homespun tweed, and gaily-attired women.

There are some lovely walks around Palampur, and the visitor who stays there should not fail to see Bundla stream. The bed of the stream lies at the bottom of a wide chasm of more than a hundred yards, but the stream is no more than a thin streak running over stony ground far below the cliff. During the monsoon, however, it swells up and rages madly over the entire width of the chasm, taking stones and boulders along with it and making a loud roaring noise like that of continuous thunder. The violence of its passage sets rocks atremble and strikes terror into the heart of any one standing near the edge. Behind this beautiful gorge stand high mountains, their tops covered with snow. A broad grassy strip runs along the edge of the steep cliff, commanding a marvellous view of the valley.

#### BAIJNATH

Bajjnath (4,150 ft.) is 11 miles from Palampur. Here the main Kangra valley may be said to end. Two Hindu temples bearing inscriptions dated 804 A.D. are worth

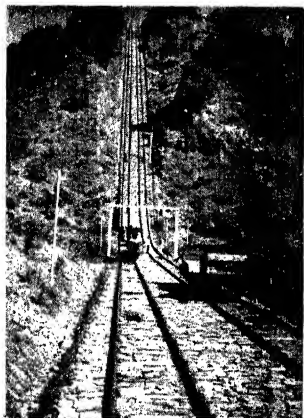


visiting. The civil rest-house or dak bungalow lies on a wind-swept spur commanding a view of the valley below.

### JOGINDERNAGAR

Leaving Baijnath, the road climbs for nearly three miles, and, on the crest of the hill at Ghatta, crosses into Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh. Jogindernagar, 15 miles from Baijnath, is the site of a big hydro-electric project. There is nothing else of great interest at Jogindernagar but the visitor should make a trip to Barot on the other side of the 8,000-ft. mountain which lies behind Jogindernagar. The journey by the haulage way which climbs straight up the steep rocky face of the mountain and then descends even more steeply to Barot is an exciting experience. Before you take your seat in the trolley which carries you up the seemingly perilous path, you are made to sign an indemnity bond on a stamped paper releasing the Electricity Department of any liability in case of accident. But you need not feel nervous. This is a mere

formality necessitated by the fact that the trolley is not primarily intended for passenger traffic. The journey is perfectly safe, and since the installation of the haulage way thirty years ago, there has not been a single accident.



A visit to the electric works and the reservoir at Barot by the haulage way is a most thrilling experience

The view of the valley as you climb up is magnificent and, on crossing the high ridge, the inner Himalayas with their snow-covered ranges present an unforgettable sight.

The reservoir which feeds the pipe-lines running down to the power-house at Jogindernagar is situated at Barot. Its capacity is 7 million cubic ft. The water is taken through a tunnel 15,000 ft. long, pierced through the mountain range, and dropped down to the power-house. At Barot there is a comfortable rest-house of the Electricity Department with hot and cold water laid on. The bungalow is ideally situated amid picturesque surroundings. There are several delightful walks in the neighbourhood and a bridle-path goes winding up through a lovely pine forest to the point where the descent of the haulage way begins. The Uhl valley is a marvellous trekking ground, and there are several rest-houses and inspection huts of the Forest Department which can provide shelter for the night.

#### MANDI

From Jogindernagar the road, after a short climb, steadily descends to Mandi, 35 miles beyond. On the way can be seen the Guma and Drang salt mines. Mandi is an interesting town though somewhat warm during the summer months, as it lies at the bottom of the valley and is only 2,480 ft. above sea level.

Rewalsar, 21 miles from Mandi along a dusty, tortuous and utterly uninteresting road, is famous for its lake with floating islands. Its significance is purely religious and historical. There are a Hindu temple, a Sikh gurdwara and a Buddhist gompa at the place, and large numbers of people of all communities go to pay homage at their respective shrines.

## MANDI-LARJI GORGE

From Mandi, the Kulu road proceeds through the Mandi-Larji gorge of the Beas river for a distance of 25 miles. The road is winding and narrow. There is one-way traffic over this portion of the road and careful driving is called for. The rocky hillsides on either side of the Beas rise almost perpendicularly to more than a thousand feet. The motor road has been blasted through solid rock, and at places it overhangs the turbulent river raging and roaring a few feet below.

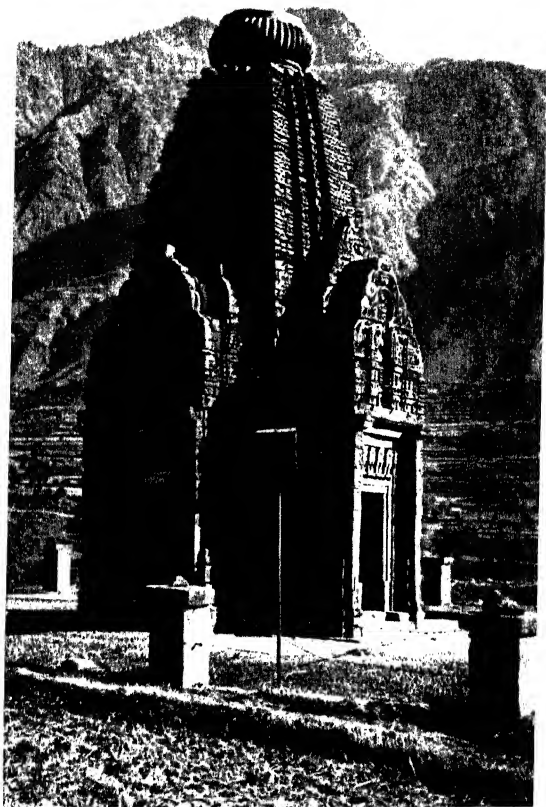
(At Aut (or Larji) the valley opens out. It is here that the Kulu valley, or the Valley of the gods, as it is frequently called, begins, and every mile up the river reveals the changing beauty of this heavenly region.

## BAJAURA

A place of special interest between Aut and Kulu is Bajaura where there is the famous temple of Basheshar Mahadev. The temple is a protected monument, and the beautifully carved stone which fell down and broke in the earthquake of 1905 has been replaced by its exact replica. The statuary of the temple was partially mutilated by iconoclasts, but the exquisite workmanship of the artist can be seen in the bas-reliefs with which the three outer walls are decorated. The temple stands a little away from the motor road towards the river, and is easily accessible.

## KULU

Kulu, the headquarters of the administrative subdivision, is at an altitude of 4,000 ft. It is somewhat warm during the months of June and early July, but for the rest of the year enjoys a delightful and healthy climate. The



Bajaura temple in Kulu

annual rainfall is only 40 inches, of which a little less than a half occurs during the winter months from October to March. There is not much snowfall, though in winter the hills on either side remain covered with a white mantle which adds to the beauty of the valley. There are P.W.D. and Forest rest-houses where accommodation is easily available.

The extensive grassy *maidan* of Kulu, stretching up to the precipitous cliff above the Beas, is reserved for public use and no buildings are allowed to be erected on it. It serves as pastureland and is the stage for colourful fairs held every year in spring and autumn. The autumn fair which marks the celebration of the Dussehra festival is the most important fair in the district, indeed in the whole State. The gods of the neighbouring villages are brought down in gaily-caparisoned palanquins to the accompaniment of pipes and drums and laid at their assigned places. Large numbers of booths and shops are set up and there is a great deal of buying and selling of local and imported products—shawls, homespun tweeds, blankets, Kulu caps and jewellery from the various parts of the valley, and *namdas*, carpets and wool from Ladakh and Yarkand. The festivities are enlivened with folk dances and songs. The Kulu people have a naturally happy temperament and at the time of the Dussehra fair, the bright multicoloured clothes of the womenfolk and a liberal intake of home-brewed ale add to the hilarity and fun of the proceedings.

On one side of the fair you may see the palanquin of a local god violently swinging, though the men carrying the long supporting poles try to keep it still. The men are helpless: the god swings from side to side because he is angry, or wishes to unburden himself of an important



Some of the gods of the Kulu valley

piece of news. The people crowd round the oscillating palanquin for this is an important occasion. The priest comes forward and places his hand on the drapery of the palanquin. Suddenly he goes into a trance and begins to utter incomprehensible sounds. These change to articulate speech and the priest, who is only the mouthpiece of the god, is ready to prophesy or answer questions. *It will not rain early this year because the people are becoming wicked. The fruit crop will be good. The floods will be worse than they were the previous year.* A voice from the crowd cries out: "When shall I be able to complete the building of my house? Three times I have constructed the roof and three times it has collapsed through no fault of mine." Promptly comes the answer from the priest: "*As soon as you return the pound of nails which your father stole from the temple.*"

Kulu town has two distinct divisions—Sultanpur, the portion where civil offices, rest-houses, hospital, etc., are located, and Akhara Bazaar, the shopping centre,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles farther for the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages.

On the hill top opposite Kulu lies perhaps the most remarkable temple in the valley. It is dedicated to Lord Shiva and is known by the name of Bijli Mahadev. It is large and substantially built, with the lower part made of finely cut large stones without any plaster or mortar to hold them together. The special feature of the temple is a tall staff, sixty feet in height, which stands near the building. The staff attracts the blessing of heaven in the form of lightning. This happens at least once a year and every time the lightning flashes down the staff, the *Shivling* in the temple is shattered to pieces. The priest collects the pieces and, fitting them together, covers them with *salton* (parched barley flour) and butter. This restores the image



Kulu musicians

to its original oneness till the next flash, when the miracle is repeated.

The temple of Bijli Mahadev can be visited on foot or on horseback. An early start is essential, for there is a climb of nearly 4,000 ft. to the temple and the first half of the route is unshaded.

#### NAGGAR

At Raison and Katrain there are several good fruit orchards and at Katrain there is a trout hatchery. Across the river and a thousand feet above it lies Naggar, a delightful town, where Nicholas Roerich, the famous Russian



painter, lived for several years. The Naggar castle is an old building which has now been converted into a rest-house. One of the bedrooms is supposed to be haunted by the ghost of a former queen who flung herself from a high balcony to prove her innocence, because she was suspected of infidelity. Naggar is a very pleasant spot for a holiday. It is cooler than Kulu, and the neighbouring woods provide many delightful walks.

There are two or three interesting temples at Naggar. An old legend has it that the small and unpretentious Jari temple in the woods behind Naggar was once connected with Manikaran, in the Pravati valley, by means of a natural subterranean passage through the mountain ranges, and an ascetic residing in the temple used to go to Manikaran for a daily bath in the sacred hot springs. In the earthquake of 1905 the tunnel or at least its mouth was destroyed. A dark opening in the heap of debris below the temple is pointed out as the entrance of this tunnel.

#### CHANDERKHANI AND MALANA

From Naggar a bridle-path climbs steeply up through a pine forest to the delightful downs of Chanderkhani. On the flowery meadows the *gujars* (cowherds) set up their *dera* (camp) during the summer months. The path continues beyond the meadows and traverses a slope covered with rhododendrons and other wild flowers to the Chanderkhani Pass. The views of high mountain ranges all around are incomparable for beauty. A visit to Chanderkhani is a 'must' for every visitor who can spare the time. With an early start, the return journey can be made in one day, but it is advisable to take tents and camp for two or three days on the

beautiful grassy downs. Milk, cream and butter are available from the *gujars*.

On the other side of the Chanderkhani Pass and 3,000 ft. below it, lies the quaint old village of Malana, a place of considerable anthropological interest. The descent to Malana makes more than a mild demand on the stamina and will-power of the visitor. The path is steep and narrow, scarcely more than a goat-track and in wet weather slippery.

Malana lies in a sheltered spot surrounded by high mountains, and its difficult approaches make it immune from too many inquisitive visitors. The residents of the village claim complete autonomy in their affairs. They pay homage to Jamlu, their god, who is a kind of demon or spirit, represented not by an image or idol, but by a slab of stone lying in the middle of a small grassy plot. Jamlu owns all the village lands under cultivation—the cultivators being his tenants. He is completely independent, and does not pay homage even to Raghunathjee, the principal god of Kulu.

The inhabitants of Malana speak a peculiar language of their own and have strange customs. No leather is allowed inside the village precincts. The village treasure, which is the property of Jamlu, is kept in a tall doorless building, the only means of ingress being a hole in the roof. When money is required for any public purpose, the priest (or *gur*, as he is called) goes down into the dark chamber and brings up an armful of whatever he can lay his hands on—coins, or silver images of a horse which are the customary offerings of pilgrims. The treasure-house is said to contain fabulous quantities of cash, gold and silver ornaments and jewels.

Every visitor to the village is treated as Jamlu *deota's* guest, and as soon as a visitor arrives, the various duties of providing milk, food and fuel are assigned to a number of persons named by the governing body of the village. Contacts with the outside world are few, and the only trade in which the devotees of Jamlu indulge is the collection and sale or barter of medicinal herbs and the roots of a plant used in the manufacture of incense.

### MANALI

Manali, 23 miles from Kulu, marks the end of the motor road. Work on the extension of this road up to Koti has been started and is expected to be finished within two years. Manali is an important trade centre and a beautiful spot in the midst of a pine wood, with high mountains towering above it and the Beas river flowing below it. For beauty of natural scenery there are few places to equal it. There are several fruit orchards, two good rest-houses and a comfortable boarding house for the convenience of visitors. A post office and a hospital add to the amenities of the place. For a proper appreciation of the charm of the Himalayas it is necessary to stay at Manali for more than a few days. In fact, Manali can be made the headquarters of a long mountain holiday which should include walks, climbs, treks and picnics judiciously punctuated with restful days, fishing for trout, sun-bathing and lotus-eating.

The pine wood behind the Forest rest-house is a veritable show-piece with its unspoilt, undulating terrain and tiny meandering rills. The Manalsu torrent, on the north, adds to its beauty.

The visitor should pay a visit to the Dhoongri temple dedicated to the goddess Hidamba which stands concealed



Manali--Queen of the Kulu valley

in a forest of magnificent deodars. According to the story narrated in the *Mahabharata*, the Pandavas during their wanderings came to this forest where a man-eating fiend resided. The fiend got ready to devour the exiled warriors and their mother, but his sister Hidamba fell in love with Bhim, and appearing before him in the guise of a beautiful maiden, warned him of the impending danger. Bhim was thus able to vanquish the wicked fiend, and rewarded Hidamba by marrying her.

Hidamba is a powerful goddess, and the Dussehra fair

at Kulu cannot take place till she arrives. Her image is usually kept in the temple at Manali village, across the Manalsu torrent, and is brought down to Dhoongri on the first day of each lunar month and on the occasion of fairs.

The Dhoongri temple has a four-tiered, pagoda-shaped roof built of thick deodar planks. The front doorway is exquisitely carved with figures and symbols representative of Hindu mythology.

Another place of historical interest is the top of a high hill above Manali village. There, at a height of 11,000 ft., lie the ruins of Jhinna Rana's fort. Jhinna Rana, the ruler of Manali, was slain by a treacherous groom who was bribed by a rival prince. On receiving the news of his death, the Rana's wives immolated themselves in the fort and their spirits are said to haunt the place to this day.

There are many interesting walks in the neighbourhood of Manali, and with the help of a local guide, day trips may be made to several mountain tops and valleys. The Manalsu *nala* and the Hamta torrent offer good opportunities for long or short excursions. The hot sulphur springs at Bashisht are less than two miles away and the mountain behind Bashisht can provide a number of pleasant walks. Above it lies a picturesque lake where the sage Bhrigu is said to have practised austerities. The journey to the lake takes two days and the visitor should take tents with him.

## KOTI

Koti, the next stage on the road to Lahoul and Leh, is within easy walking distance of Manali, being only seven miles away. The Beas here flows through a deep and narrow gorge which is almost a subterranean passage, more than a hundred feet below the footbridge which spans

it. Two miles from Koti, at the start of the climb to the Rohtang Pass, is Rahala, an ideal picnic spot. Cunningly concealed behind a spur are the famous Rahala Falls which a visitor to Koti must not fail to see. Halfway between Koti and Rahala, a number of small openings on the hillside near the road may be observed. These openings emit a cold breath of air which, in stormy weather, becomes a whistling blast. The openings are apparently the mouths of subterranean chimneys having their other ends somewhere high up on mountain tops.

There is an interesting legend about an ancient princess of Manali who was given in marriage to the prince of Naggar. The princess became homesick and wrote home to her father that she was languishing for a sight of the rocks and mountains near the palace where she was born and bred. The king, her father, read the letter aloud to the queen and some bees, which were collecting honey in the royal garden, heard the sad nostalgic lament of the young princess. They set to work at once, and cut out a large slab of rock from the mountain nearby, and carrying it to Naggar, laid it at the feet of their beloved princess. The local residents will point out to you the clean triangular patch in the face of a vertical rock two miles from Manali, showing the exact spot from where the slab was removed by the bees. At Naggar you can see the slab itself resting in a small shrine in the castle.

#### MANIKARAN

Manikaran in the Parvati valley is famed for its hot springs. The water comes up under pressure and its temperature is well above boiling point. There is no sulphur or iron in the water, but it is said to be radio-active.

The healing properties of the Manikaran springs are known all over the country, and pilgrims from far-off places come here for a cure of their ailments. Rheumatism, gout, pneumonia, bronchitis and muscular pains are said to be rapidly cured by treatment at the hot springs.

The springs are situated near the bank of the river Parvati. The rocks surrounding the spring are uncomfortably hot, and some Sikh hermits have built a small hot room for curative sweating. Pilgrims and local villagers often cook their meals in the spring water. Rice placed in a muslin bag, or tied up in a loose cloth and thrown into the pool of hot water, is cooked to nicety in twenty minutes. Lentils or vegetables are cooked in a pan resting on the hot water. Even *chapattis* are cooked by immersion. The taste of the bread is similar to that of boiled suet pudding.

According to an ancient legend, Lord Shiva and his divine consort, Parvati, were once walking along the valley when Parvati dropped one of her earrings. The jewel was snatched up by the serpent Sheshnag and taken down to the nether world. Parvati wanted her earring back and begged her husband to retrieve it. Shiva began a *tap* of such intensity that his prayers and austerities shook the world. Fear entered the heart of Sheshnag and he surrendered Parvati's *mani* or jewel by shooting it up under the pressure of water from the under world. Along with Parvati's earring came up other tiny jewels and these continued to be thrown up till the earthquake of 1905 partially closed the mouth of the main spring located behind the temple of Ramchanderji. The Negi (headman), if requested, will show you some of these jewels—small pearl-shaped pills thrown up by the spring, consisting of carbonate of lime and believed to possess miraculous

properties. The place derives its name from the old legend and the pearly jewels that the spring used to bring up.

The Parvati valley provides an ideal six-day trek. The scenery is beautiful, there are some glorious pine forests on the way, at Kasol and at Pulga, where the last rest-house is situated. The total distance between Bhuin where the Parvati joins the Beas and Pulga is 30 miles. The stages are Jari (12 miles), Kasol (5 miles), Pulga (12 miles). From Pulga, if time permits, a visit to the hot springs at Khirganga makes a day's outing and an excellent picnic. Beyond lies the Pin Parvati Pass over the rugged mountain-range that separates the Parvati valley from the Pin valley in Spiti.

#### KAISDHAR

A delightful spot for a quiet holiday where one may commune with Nature and observe the beauty of her changing face is Kaisdhar—a walk or ride of ten miles from Kulu. There is a comfortable rest-house of the Forest Department at Kaisdhar and a *dera* of *gujars* in the pasture land near it. The *gujars* will supply milk and butter, and since they go down to Kulu daily to sell their milk, they can be engaged to bring up supplies of fruit, eggs, vegetable, etc. There are innumerable walks in the neighbourhood of Kaisdhar, and the surrounding mountains are easily approachable by well-constructed forest paths. The views of distant mountain ranges and valleys are magnificent.

The path to Kaisdhar takes off at a point behind the Civil rest-house, and after climbing steadily up the barren shadeless face of the hill for two miles, enters a dense pine forest and continues pleasantly for the remaining eight miles to Kaisdhar. The gradient is gentle and there are few delights to equal the walk to and from Kaisdhar.





Cherry blossoms in full bloom



The Bhaga river at Jispa

### CHAPTER III

#### LAHOUL AND SPITI

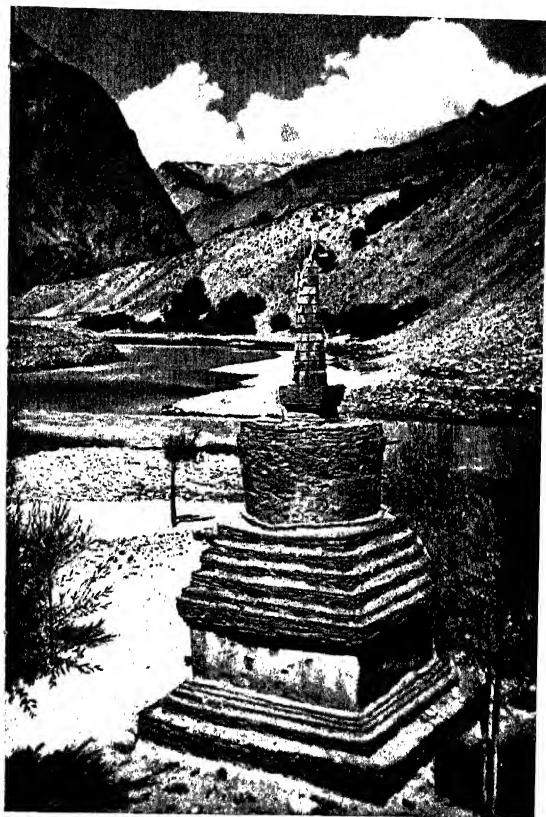
Lahoul and Spiti deserve a chapter to themselves. To the uninitiated they mean little more than barren rocks and the rigours of a journey over difficult terrain through raging torrents, perilous mountain paths and glaciers unrelieved by ordinary creature comforts. To the lover of mountains the names conjure up visions of long sweeping slopes of pure white snow, bridges and caves made of solid iridescent

ice, massive monoliths and grotesque rock formations, green grassy meadows covered with an intricate pattern of multicoloured flowers in which buttercups and daisies, forget-me-nots, iris, columbines, violets, anemones and harebell make up a gay carpet stretching out for a mile or more. There are edelweiss galore and artemisia, the fragrant herb from which santonin, the specific remedy for worms, is extracted. The Himalayas here assume their wildest and their most magnificent aspect. The rich colouring of Lahoul with its sparse vegetation and the barren splendour of Spiti remain fresh in the visitor's memory for ever and he feels that his visit to these parts has added a new dimension to his experience of nature and aesthetic appreciation.

The "inner line" crosses these valleys at points which will be indicated presently. Foreign visitors may go up to the inner line, but if they wish to cross it, a permit must be obtained from the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi. There is no restriction on the use of cameras up to the inner line.

### LAHOUL

A trek to the Lahoul valley is by no means an arduous undertaking. The pathway is easy and broad along its entire length, and the journey can be performed on foot or on horseback. Indeed, a large portion of the road is jeepable, and recently a jeep was dismantled, carried over the Rohtang Pass and reassembled on the other side. To the wonder and amazement of the Lahoulis, who had never seen a mechanically propelled vehicle, the jeep careered up and down the Lahoul valley with its characteristic noise. Men and women came out to worship this manifestation of supernatural power!



Buddhist chorten at Tandi in Lahoul

There are rest-houses at every stage, and though the visitor will have to carry most of his provisions, flour, yak butter and potatoes are available at Kyelang, the civil headquarters of the sub-tehsil.

The bridle-path to Lahoul starts near the P.W.D. rest-house (Manali) and goes down to the Beas. After crossing the river by a cantilever bridge, it turns left and continues up the left bank. The valley unfolds itself in a series of delightful views. Koti is reached after seven miles, and two miles beyond lies Rahala where the steep ascent to the Rohtang Pass (13,400 ft.) begins. It is a stiff climb all the way, and after Rahala no shade is available. The top of the pass is broad and nearly a mile long.

The source of the Beas, known as Beas Rikhi, lies a few yards to the right of the path. A thousand feet above the pass to the left is the small lake where a fair is held annually to commemorate a legend dating from the time of the Mughal emperor, Akbar. A descent of three thousand feet brings the traveller to Khoksar, a bleak and windy spot on the bank of the Chandra river. From here the road is jeepable for the next few stages. The scenery is wild and comparatively barren. The mountains on either side of the valley rise steeply to great heights, and several glaciers resting on lofty shelves relieve the jagged appearance of the rocky ranges. Eight miles from Khoksar is the next stage, Sissu, picturesquely situated a thousand feet above the Chandra. An easy walk of another eight miles brings the traveller to Gondla, where the eight-storey residence of the Thakur of Gondla stands in the centre of the village as a striking landmark. Kyelang lies 10 miles beyond Gondla and the route crosses the river at Tandi, the junction of the Chandra and Bhaga rivers.



A Lama and his friend

Cherry blossoms in full bloom

At Kyelang there is a high school, a post office, a hospital and a police station. It is the headquarters of the sub-tehsil. A radio-telegraph office has recently been installed here. Across the river and near the top of the hill opposite, lies the Kardung monastery which is well worth a visit. Another famous monastery is the Sha Shur monastery, 2,000 ft. above the village. The Guru Ghantal gompa above Tandi has a more difficult approach, but, if time permits, the visitor should make an effort to climb up to it. His labours will be well rewarded.

Kyelang to Jispa, 200 ft. above (14 miles), is a delightful walk along an undulating road. At Khansar, four miles before Jispa, is the residence of Thakur Mangal Chand. The rest-house is located on the edge of a pine forest.

The "inner line" crosses the road at Darcha, four miles beyond Jispa, and foreign visitors must obtain a permit before crossing it.

There are comfortable rest-houses at Khoksar, Sissu, Gondla, Kyelang and two stages beyond.

### SPITI

The visitor to Spiti must carry tents and all necessary provisions including an oil stove, for the barren countryside provides little or no fuel for long stretches. There are no rest-houses *en route*, and though yak milk and yak butter are available, the visitor unused to their taste will not find them palatable. The only crops grown by the Spitials are barley, buck-wheat and pea.

The Spiti route branches off the descent from the Rohtang Pass, a mile above Khoksar, and continues for 8 miles to Chatru along the left bank of the Chandra. Here, it crosses the river and proceeds up the right bank along the newly-



The Kunzum Pass (15,000 ft.)

constructed bridle-path avoiding the frequent mountain torrents and the Shigri glacier which impeded the traveller's progress over the old route along the left bank. At Butal a bridge over the Chandra is being constructed and will soon be completed. In the mean-time, crossings are made by means of a *jhoola*, a cradle suspended from pulleys resting on a cable spanning the river. The crossing is perfectly safe, though not without a mild thrill.

From here the path climbs up a steep and barren mountain to the Kunzum Pass (15,000 ft.) and enters the Spiti valley. A magnificent view of the snow ranges on either side of the pass is obtainable from the top, and Spiti presents an unforgettable picture of barren splendour. The descent from the pass lies over grassy undulating downs and the walk is easy and pleasant. A few torrents have to be crossed and care must be exercised in choosing the most suitable spot. The safest course is to leave the

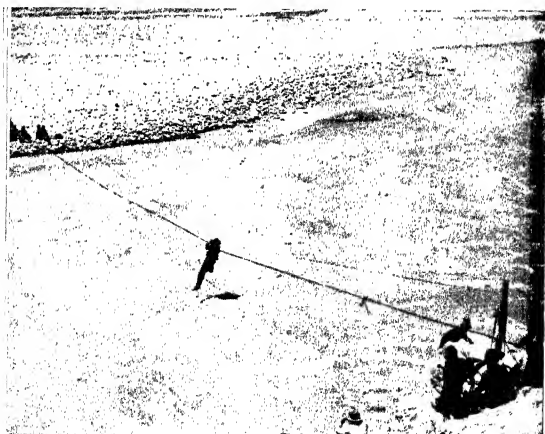


decision to the instinct of the riding pony or pack-mule, as animals rarely make a mistake when allowed free play in such a matter. The Kala Khol (black torrent) looks more dangerous than it is.

Losar is the first village in Spiti and a sight of human habitation is welcome after days of lonely trekking through the barren wilderness of the Chandra valley. The Spiti river lies at the bottom of a deep ravine, in the middle of a narrow plateau which is dotted by a number of villages on either side of the valley.

The mountainscape in Spiti has a strange and exotic appearance. The river is a fast-moving torrent which has cut its way through the ages to the bottom of a deep ravine. The valley is scarcely a mile across, with narrow strips of level and cultivable land lying a thousand feet above the river-bed. Steep rocky mountains rise from these level

Crossing the Pin torrent by cable



strips to a height of several thousand feet. All around is displayed a marvellous "panorama of rugged crags and steep rubble slopes that change their colours from pale pink to bright scarlet, from slate gray to deep blue and purple. These alternate with the soft blues and greens of glaciers. There are no trees and shrubs, except in the villages where poplars and willows eke out a scanty existence from the moisture provided by snow streams. Suddenly, you come upon a glorious meadow of luscious grass or a bank of wild flowers up at a great height with a spring or a tiny rill flowing through the grass. Here you may rest and take a refreshing drink. A little later you may be called upon to cross a treacherous torrent which rumbles like distant thunder as stones and boulders come hurtling downhill with the force of water."

The Spital is somewhat of a foreigner in appearance, language, custom and religion. His features have the peculiar Mongolian cast—narrow eyes, high cheek bones and short stature. His complexion is fresh and ruddy, but since he never enjoys the luxury of a bath, he carries with him a strong odour of sweat and rancid yak butter of which he rubs a liberal quantity on his body to keep out the cold and counteract the effects of dry winds which are a permanent feature of the valley.

His dress consists of a loose shirt reaching down to the knees and a pair of pyjamas, the lower ends of which are tucked into the felt leggings of his leather boots. Over everything he wears a long loose double-breasted woollen gown, reinforced by a woollen rope of astonishing length which is wound round the waist in multiple coils. This serves as a belt providing warmth and support to the body where it is most needed, and turns the upper part of the



A typical Spittal wearing his boots with felt leggings

gown into an ample blouse with deep roomy pouches in which all kinds of articles are stored. A packet of his staple food, *sattoo*, made from parched barley flour, a prayer box containing the picture of the head lama of his monastery, a silver bowl for his water, tea or liquor, a spare garment, a pair of shoes, a newly-born lamb can all find a place in these pockets.

Women wear the same kind of shirt and pyjamas, but instead of a gown they frequently have a shawl draped round their shoulders. They grease their hair with rancid butter and wear it in numerous thin plaits which are made longer and more numerous by weaving yak's tail hair into them. Their coiffeur thus resembles a long net of black strands spread over the entire back and stretching as far down as the knees.

9343  
Since food is scarce and arable land limited, an increase in population would prove disastrous. The Spitians have evolved a scheme of warding off the danger of over population and slow starvation. The law of primogeniture is observed throughout the valley. The eldest son inherits the land and property of his father. The younger sons are sent to the lamaseries of which there are several in the locality. The young lamas take a vow of celibacy and thus an increase in population is checked. There are convents for women who fail to find husbands, but though monogamy is the general rule, both polygamy and polyandry are practised. If the eldest son dies, his younger brother leaves the lamasery on paying a fee and returns to secular life. He takes over his deceased brother's land and also his widow.

The valley of the Pin river, a tributary of the Spiti, is even narrower and wilder than that of the Spiti. In places it is scarcely more than a deep gorge with rocky cliffs rising



The Chandra river in Lahoul flanked by snow-covered mountains

perpendicularly for several thousand feet. The valley joins the main Spiti valley at a point near Dungkar and goes up in a south-westerly direction, ending below the Pin Parvati range, on the other side of which lies the Parvati valley.

There are five monasteries in Spiti—Kye, Dungkar, Tabo, Thang-gyud and Pin. Those at Kye and Pin are the most important—the Kye monastery, in particular, has a great wealth of painted scrolls.

The “inner line” follows the Spiti river upwards up to Kibar, then goes north to Takling La. Foreign visitors can, therefore, go freely up to Kibar where there is a magnificent gorge.



A winter scene—visitors crossing a snow bridge in the Kulu valley

#### CHAPTER IV

### TREKKING IN KULU

Frequent references to trekking routes in the Kulu valley have already been made. The more interesting routes are described here in some detail.

#### SIMLA TO KULU

The total distance of this route is 133 miles of which the first 66 up to Lahri and the last 32 from Banjar can be

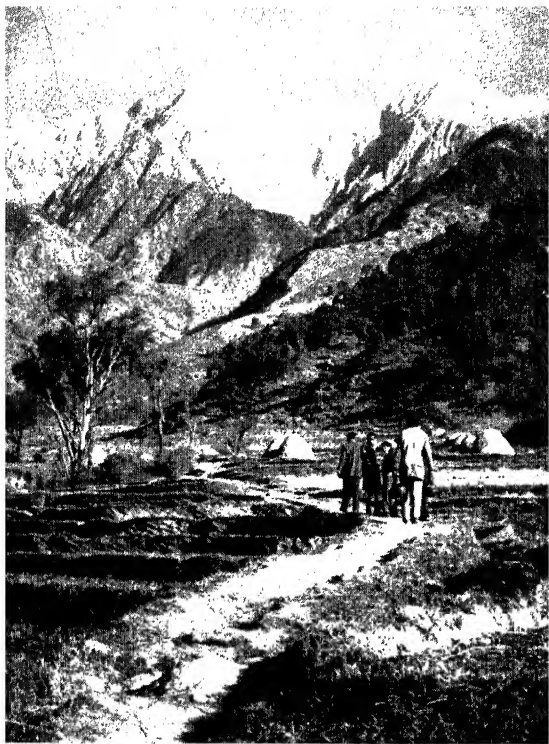
covered by bus. The middle portion of the route is by far the most interesting and Shoja is a veritable beauty spot where the visitor will want to linger and make more than a single day's halt. The path is broad and jeepable throughout. The stages from Simla are given in Appendix IV.

#### KULU TO PULGA IN PARVATI VALLEY

Travel from Kulu to Buntar by bus and proceed on foot or horseback to Bhuin across the suspension bridge over the Beas. The next stage is Jari—a hot march of 12 miles. At Jari there is a hospital in charge of a Sub-Assistant Surgeon. The walk to Kasol (5 miles) lies through wooded country. Kasol is a picturesque spot and the valley at this place opens out to present a delightful panorama of the river bed and the distant rugged peaks of the Pin Parvati range. Kasol to Pulga is a pleasant walk of 10 miles. There is a steady climb all the way and 2 miles from Kasol lie the Manikaran hot springs. Pulga (7,000 ft.) is a beautiful spot, located on a clearing in the forest, and there are many pleasant walks in the neighbourhood. Mention has already been made of the hot springs at Khinganga, six miles away. There are Forest rest-houses at all the stages mentioned. Milk, and occasionally eggs, are available from the local contractor, but the visitor will do well to carry his own provisions. Near Pulga there are pasturelands where cowherds set up camp during the summer months and a plentiful supply of milk is available.

#### CHANDERKĦANI AND MALANA

At Katrain cross the suspension bridge over the Beas and climb up to Naggar. From Naggar an early start should be made as there is a stiff climb ahead to



Trekking is a thrilling experience in the Kulu valley

Cherry blossoms in full bloom



Chanderkhani (7 miles) where there is a good camping ground near the cowherds' *dera*. The path to the pass proceeds along a flower-strewn mountain slope with clumps of rhododendrons spread over its face. The pass is a narrow gap in the knife-edged range from where a glorious view of the high mountains on all sides is obtained. Indeed, there are few sights in the valley to equal the panorama of snow-covered peaks, glaciers and distant passes which lie spread out all around. The path now goes down, at first gently and then steeply, to the quaint old village of Malana.

The journey may be continued by a steep and narrow path to Jari in the Parvati valley or over the Rashol Pass to Manikaran.

Tents and provisions must be carried on this trek. It will be necessary to hire porters, because the path from the Chanderkhani Pass down to Malana and Jari is unsuitable for ponies.

#### JOGINDERNAGAR TO KULU VIA BHUBU PASS

This is a short and pleasant trek. There are rest-houses all the way and the route, consisting of a broad bridle-path, is suitable for ponies.

From Jogindernagar proceed along the motor road and after passing the Guma salt mines, take the bridle-path to Jatingari (11 miles) which branches off on the left. The next stage is Bhadwani (13 miles). This involves a descent to the Uhl river after crossing which the path rises to Bhadwani in a long sweep. Karaon (10 miles) lies across the Bhubu Pass (9,430 ft.), which is reached after a stiff climb. The path passes through a forest of magnificent deodars and goes down to Karaon and on to Kulu (8 miles) along the valley of the Sarwari.

## JOGINDERNAGAR TO KULU VIA DULCHI PASS

Proceed along the motor road up to Drang, 36 miles from Jogindernagar. Here branch off for Kataula (12 miles) by a bridle-path which passes through picturesque scenery and crosses the Uhl river where good fishing is available in a pool below the bridge. From Kataula there is a steep ascent of 9 miles to the Dulchi Pass (6,760 ft.). The road is bare and shadeless for the most part. From the Pass there is a gentle descent along a winding path through beautiful forest scenery to Bajaura (18 miles). At Bajaura the route joins the motor road to Kulu (9 miles).

## ROUND TRIP FROM MANALI OVER THE HAMTA AND ROHTANG PASSES

This is an extremely pleasant though somewhat arduous trek of five or six days. It will be necessary to carry tents. Ponies and pack mules go all the way.

The road goes down to the Beas river, and, after crossing it, turns right and proceeds for two miles to Prini, a picturesque village nestling at the foot of a high mountain. After a steep ascent of two miles through a thick pine forest, the path continues along gently sloping downs and pasture lands. A recently-built village of Lahoul horse-traders is passed, and the camping ground of Chika (10 miles) is reached. Two miles from Chika the steep ascent to the Hamta Pass (14,000 ft.) begins. There is lovely mountain scenery all the way with snow bridges over streams and clumps of rhododendrons. From the Hamta Pass the road goes down, and after winding through wild and magnificent scenery, reaches the left bank of the Chandra, where there is a good camping ground at Chatru (9 miles). From Chatru proceed down the left bank to Khoksar (8 miles)

where there is a rest-house. The return journey from Khoksar lies over the Rohtang Pass (13,400 ft.) to Koti (13 miles) and on to Manali (7 miles). The view of the Lahoul valley from the pass is worth all the labour and toil of reaching the top. The snow-covered Geyphang peaks and the chain of glaciers resting on shelves arranged along the entire mountain range is something that is characteristic of the inner Himalayas. The valley of the Beas at Rahala, where the steep descent ends, is remarkable for its peaceful and soothing beauty. The Rahala falls, concealed behind a grassy spur, are a few minutes' walk to the left and are well worth a visit.

#### THE SOLANG NALA

A trek up the Solang Nala and beyond is a very rewarding undertaking. Tents and porters are required for this trip. The path branches off to the left from the Kulu-Lahoul road, a quarter mile after crossing the Beas at mile 6, and continues along the Solang Nala through reserved forests. The first day's camp should be set up two miles beyond the bifurcation. The next day the trekker leaves the tree line and enters wild Himalayan scenery with glaciers and snow-falls within easy reach. Here he may camp for three or four days and explore the magnificent mountain terrain beyond. He may continue the journey into Bara Bangahal, but the route is difficult and a pass of 18,000 ft. must be crossed.

#### KAISDHAR AND NAGINI

A round trip, taking in Kaisdhar and Nagini, is a most delightful way of spending a week's holiday. A broad forest path of easy gradient takes off from a point behind the Tourist Bureau, Kulu, and after two miles of ascent



Crossing the Rohtang

up the dry face of the hill towering above the Kulu valley turns right into the Sarwari valley. After a short distance the path turns left again and continues through a delightful pine forest, ascending gently to Kaisdhar, where there is a rest-house. A halt of two or three days will enable the visitor to see the beautiful wooded neighbourhood of Kaisdhar. Proceed by the forest path which goes steeply down the valley and then climbs up to the rest-house at Nagini situated in the heart of a beautiful forest. The return journey is made *via* Bajaura, 9 miles from Kulu on the motor road.

## KULU TO JARI VIA BORSU

This is a delightful walk along easy forest paths with rest-houses located at convenient intervals. After crossing the Beas by the bridge beyond the bazar, turn right and climb up to the Borsu rest-house by the forest road. Thence proceed to the temple of Bijli Mahadev on the crest of the hill and then descend by the forest path to the bridge across the Parvati river near Jari. The last portion of the road is not suitable for ponies.

## CONCLUSION

The treks described in this chapter are easy and no special equipment is required. Strong boots with non-slipping soles are essential, a stout alpenstock or stick is often a help. A straw hat is light to carry and offers good protection from the sun which is very intense at high altitudes.

Tents should be light and windproof. Provisions should be packed in boxes which are not so bulky as to foul the hillside along narrow mountain paths when carried on pack mules.

A few essential medicines in a first-aid box should be included. A camera and a plentiful supply of films will keep the delights of a mountain holiday alive for many years to come. For the rest, love of mountains and fondness for fresh air and life in the open are all that are necessary for the complete enjoyment of a holiday in Kangra and Kulu.

# IMPORTANT FAIRS HELD IN KANGRA AND KULU

Serial No.	Name of fair	Place and tehsil	Date (s)	Significance	Extent of gathering	Important events usually taking place	Means of access and distance from motor road	
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Shivratri Fair	Sarbari, Baijnath and Kunj Darwar, Tehsil Palampur	15th to 18th February	Religious. To pay homage to God Shiva	About 5,000 to 6,000 persons in each place	On Shivratri day God Shiva is worshipped throughout the whole night and orthodox Hindus do not sleep at all. In the fair sometimes tournaments of students are also arranged at Baijnath	Only Baijnath and Sarbari can be reached by van or lorry; other places are in villages	
2	Saliana Fair	Salina, Tehsil Palampur	29th to 31st March	Wrestling matches	8,000 to 12,000 persons	Volleyball matches and cattle shows are held	4 miles from motorable road	
3	Holi Fair	Sujanpur Tira, Tehsil Hamirpur	4th to 6th March	Religious festival	4,000 to 10,000 persons	Nil	Accessible by vehicular traffic	

## Important Fairs (Contd.)

Serial No.	Name of fair	Place and Tehsil	Date (s)	Significance	Extent of gathering	Important events usually taking place	Means of access and distance from motor road
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4	Kanihara Fair	Kanihara, Tehsil Kangra	30th and 31st March	Wrestling matches	4,000 to 8,000 persons	Cattle show	Can be reached by motor lorry
5	Bhikhashah Fair	Bhawarna, Tehsil Palampur	17th to 19th May	Started to commemorate the memory of Bhikhashah, a Rajput <i>Chela</i> of a Muslim Faqir	6,000 to 8,000 persons	A big cattle show is held	Can be reached by motor lorry
6	Dal Fair	Upper Dharamsala, Tehsil Kangra	3rd September	People come and bathe in Dal Lake and Bhagsu Nath Water Springs	3,000 to 5,000 persons	Nil	1½ miles from motorable road
7	Nawratra Fair	Kangra and Jwalamukhi	3rd to 12th April	Religious. People come to pay homage to goddess Jwalamukhi	2,000 to 3,000 persons	Nil	Can be reached by motor lorry

8	Nagini Fair	Nagini, Tehsil Nurpur	25th August	Religious. People come to pay their offerings to the goddess Nagini, the Snake-Mother	4,000 to 5,000 persons	Nil	Off a motor road
9	Dussehra Fair	Kulu proper	7th to 12th October	Religious. The fair is celebrated to honour Lord Raghunath and mark the death of Ravana, the demon-king	8,000 to 10,000 persons	Exhibition of beneficent departments is arranged here. People from far and near come and sell carpets, woollen rugs, namdas, dry fruit, etc.	Off a motor road
10	Panjin Fair	Nirhana, Tehsil Dehra	On Panchmi of the month of Jeth (5th day) (May)	Religious. People worship Lord Shiva and spend the night singing religious songs	5,000 to 6,000 persons	Wrestling matches are also arranged	In a village 2 miles from Mangwal railway station. On the bank of river Beas

*Note* :—The dates of these fairs are, in some cases, fixed according to the lunar calendar and are subject to change.



APPENDIX I  
PATHANKOT TO MANALI (KULU) BY MOTOR ROAD—199 MILES

Stage	Miles	Approximate elevation	Accommodation	Reservation authority	Remarks
Pathankot	—		P.W.D. Rest House, Railway Refreshment Rooms and Waiting Rooms	For P.W.D. Rest House, Executive Engineer, Amritsar Provincial Division, Amritsar	Railhead
Nurpur	19		P.W.D. Rest House	Executive Engineer, P.W.D., Dharamsala	
Shahpur	21	2,400 ft.	Dak Bungalow	Permit not necessary	21 miles from Kangra lies the famous temple of Jwalamukhi
Gaggal (for Kangra Dharamsala)	8 3 8				
Palampur	24	4,100 ft.	Dak Bungalow, P.W.D. Rest House	Executive Engineer, P.W.D. Dharamsala	Tea gardens
Bajinath	11	4,100 ft.	Civil Rest House	—	Bajinath Temple

Ghatta	3	—		Himachal Pradesh territory begins
Jogindernagar	12	3,800 ft.	Himachal Pradesh P.W.D. Rest House, Electricity Branch Rest House	Executive Engineer, P.W.D. Mandi. Resident Engineer, P.W.D. Electricity Branch Rest House, Jogindernagar
Mandi	35	2,480 ft.	Civil Rest House-cum-Circuit House	Executive Engineer, Mandi Division, Mandi
Kulu (Sultanpur)	43	4,000 ft.	Dak Bungalow	No permit necessary
			Civil Rest House	Sub-Divisional Officer, Civil, Kulu
			Forest Rest House	Divisional Forest Officer, Kulu
			Aluminium Tourist Huts	Public Relations Officer, Kulu
			Calvert Lodge (1st April to 31st October every year)	Sub-Divisional Officer, Civil, Kulu

## Appendix I (Contd.)

Stage	Miles	Approximate elevation	Accommodation	Reservation authority	Remarks
Katraain	12	4,800 ft.	Civil Rest House	Sub-Divisional Officer, Civil, Kulu	
Manali	11	6,000 ft.	Civil Rest House	Sub-Divisional Officer, Civil, Kulu	
			Forest Rest House	Divisional Forest Officer, Kulu	
			Aluminium Tourist Hut	Public Relations Officer, Kulu	
			Paying Guest Establishments	H.M. Banon Esq., Manali	
				H.L. Banon Esq., Manali	
				H.A. Banon Esq., Manali	

*Note* :—There is one-way traffic between Mandi and Aut. Barrier timings can be checked from the Tourist Bureau, Pathankot, or the Tourist Information Bureau at Mandi.

# APPENDIX II

## ROUTE 'A': KULU TO MANALI—23 MILES

Stage	Miles	Approximate elevation	Accommodation	Reservation authority	Remarks
Kulu (Sultanpur)	—	4,000 ft.	See Appendix I	See Appendix I	Kaisdhar, delightful holiday spot. Forest Rest House—10 miles
Raison	8	4,700 ft.	Aramgarh (furnished) The Shacks	L. Munshi Ram L. Durga Dass } Raison	Several fruit orchards
Katraain	4	4,800 ft.	Civil Rest House	Sub-Divisional Forest Officer, Civil, Kulu	Trout hatchery and bee-keeping farms
			River View (furnished) Tysonia with Annexe (furnished)	J. Tyson, Raison	
Naggar	2	5,800 ft.	Civil Rest House	Sub-Divisional Officer, Civil, Kulu	On opposite bank of the river, Chanderkhani is 7 miles further away from Naggar
			P.W.D. Rest House	Sub-Divisional Officer, P.W.D. Kulu	
			Forest Rest House	Divisional Forest Officer, Kulu	

## Appendix II (Contd.)

Stage	Miles	Approximate elevation	Accommodation	Reservation authority	Remarks
Bara Gaon	1	4,800 ft.	Furnished Cottage	Major H.M. Banon, Manali	
Manali	8	6,000 ft.	Civil Rest House	Sub-Divisional Officer, Civil, Kulu	Bashist hot water sulphur springs are 2 miles from here
			Forest Rest House Paying Guest Establishments	Divisional Forest Officer, Kulu H.M. Banon, Esqr., Manali H.L. Banon, Esqr., Manali H.A. Banon, Esqr., Manali	
			Aluminium Tourist Hut	Public Relations Officer, Kulu	

## APPENDIX III

## ROUTE 'B': SIMLA TO KULU VIA JALORI PASS

Stage	Miles	Approximate elevation	Accommodation	Reservation authority	Remarks
Simla	—	7,262 ft.	Several Hotels		
Narkanda	40	9,100 ft.	Rest House	Executive Engineer P.W.D. Mahasu Division, Himachal Pradesh, Simla	By bus
Luhri	26	2,600 ft.	P.W.D. Rest House	Executive Engineer, P.W.D. Mahasu Division, Himachal Pradesh, Simla	On the Sutlej river

Ani	12	4,000 ft.	Civil Rest House	Sub-Divisional Officer, Civil, Kulu	Between Khanag and Shoja c r o s s Jalori pass 10,000 ft. Open from May to October.
Khanag	9	8,300 ft.	Civil Rest House	Sub-Divisional Officer, Civil, Kulu	
Shoja	7	8,800 ft.	Civil Rest House	Sub-Divisional Officer, Civil, Kulu	
Banjar	9	5,000 ft.	P. W. D. Rest House	Sub-Divisional Officer, P. W. D., Kulu	Part of this route is jeepable but requires careful driving
Larji	12	3,200 ft.	Civil Rest House	Sub-Divisional Officer, Civil, Kulu	
Aut	3	3,300 ft.	Forest Rest House	Divisional Forest Officer, Mandi	
Bajaura	11	3,600 ft.	Civil Rest House	Sub-Divisional Officer, Civil, Kulu	
Kulu	9	4,000 ft.	See Appendix I	See Appendix I	

APPENDIX IV  
ROUTE 'C': SIMLA TO KULU VIA RAMPUR AND BASHLEO PASS

Stage	Miles	Approximate elevation	Accommodation	Reservation authority	Remarks
Narkanda		9,100 ft.	Rest House	Executive Engineer, P.W.D. Mahasu Division, Himachal Pradesh, Simla	
Kotgarh	10		Dak Bungalow	Executive Engineer, P.W.D. Mahasu Division, Himachal Pradesh, Simla	
Nirth	10		P.W.D. Rest House	Executive Engineer, Mahasu Division, Himachal Pradesh, P.W.D., Simla	
Rampur	13	3,330 ft.	P.W.D. Rest House	Executive Engineer, Himachal Pradesh, P.W.D., Rampur	
Arsu	8	5,800 ft.	P.W.D. Rest House	Sub-Divisional Officer, P.W.D., Kulu	
Sarhan	8	8,000 ft.	Civil Rest House	Sub-Divisional Officer, Civil, Kulu	Between Sarhan and Bathad cross Bashleo Pass 10,750 ft. Open from the beginning of May to the end of October

Bathad	8	6,000 ft.	P.W.D. Rest House	Sub-Divisional P.W.D., Kulu	Officer,
Banjar	11	5,000 ft.	P.W.D. Rest House	Sub-Divisional P.W.D., Kulu	Officer,

*Note*:—From Simla to Narkanda as Route 'B'.  
From Banjar onwards to Kulu as Route 'B'.  
The road from Simla to Sarhan is motorable (Hindustan-Tibet Road)

#### APPENDIX V

### ROUTE 'D': KULU TO LINGTI (KASHMIR STATE BOUNDARY) VIA ROHTANG AND BARALACHA PASS

#### Route 'A': Kulu to Manali

Stage	Miles	Approximate elevation	Accommodation	Reservation authority	Remarks
Manali					
Koti	7	8,500 ft.	Civil Rest House, etc.	See Route 'A'	Rahala Falls—2 miles from Koti
Khoksar	13	10,400 ft.	P.W.D. Rest House	Sub-Divisional P.W.D., Kulu	Visitors should take their cooks along with them. They should also take provisions. Route to Spiti branches off a mile above Khoksar



## Appendix V (Contd.)

Stage	Miles	Approximate elevation	Accommodation	Reservation authority	Remarks
Sissu	8	10,100 ft.	P.W.D. Rest House	Sub-Divisional Officer, P.W.D., Kulu	Between Koti and Khoksar crosses Rohtang Pass 13,400 ft. Open about end of May to end of October
Gondla	8	10,300 ft.	P.W.D. Rest House	Sub-Divisional Officer, P.W.D., Kulu	
Keylang	10	10,400 ft.	P.W.D. Rest House	Sub-Divisional Officer, P.W.D., Kulu	
Jispa	14	10,500 ft.	P.W.D. Rest House	Sub-Divisional Officer, P.W.D., Kulu	Between Zing Zing Bar and Kirilung cross Baralacha Pass 16,200 ft.
Patseo	11	12,500 ft.	P.W.D. Rest House	Sub-Divisional Officer, P.W.D., Kulu	
Zing Zing Bar Kirilung Lingti	5 12 17	14,000 ft. 14,000 ft. 14,000 ft.	Serai Serai Small Serai	Permit not necessary	From Patseo onwards, tents and camp equipment are necessary

APPENDIX VI  
ROUTE 'E': PARVATI VALLEY

Stage	Miles	Approximate elevation	Accommodation	Reservation authority	Remarks
Kulu (Sultanpur) —		4,000 ft.	Dak Bungalow, etc.	See Appendix I	Kulu to Bhuntar by bus and then to Bhuin by pony and on foot. Another route from Kulu to Jari is <i>via</i> Barsu
Bhuin	7	3,700 ft.	Forest Rest House	Divisional Forest Officer, Kulu	
Jari	12	5,000 ft.	Forest Rest House	Divisional Forest Officer, Kulu	
Karol	5	5,300 ft.	Forest Rest House	Divisional Forest Officer, Kulu	
Manikaran	2½	5,700 ft.	No Rest House		Hot water springs
Pulga	7½	7,000 ft.	Forest Rest House	Divisional Forest Officer, Kulu	Hot water springs at Khirganga (6 miles)

APPENDIX VII  
**ROUTE 'F': JOGINDERNAGAR TO KULU VIA BHUBU PASS**

Stage	Miles	Approximate elevation	Accommodation	Reservation authority	Remarks
Jogindernagar	—	3,880 ft.	Himachal Pradesh, P.W.D. Rest House & Electricity Branch Rest House	See Appendix I	
Jatingri	11	6,600 ft.	Himachal Pradesh Pass Rest House	Executive Engineer, Mandi	
Sil Bhadwani	13	6,000 ft.	Forest Rest House	Divisional Forest Officer, Mandi	Cross Bhubu Pass 9,430 ft.
Karaon	10	6,400 ft.	Civil Rest House	Sub-Divisional Officer, Civil, Kulu	
Kulu (Sultanpur)	8	4,000 ft.	Dak Bungalows, etc.	See Appendix I	

APPENDIX VIII  
**ROUTE 'G': JOGINDERNAGAR TO KULU VIA DULCHI PASS**

Stage	Miles	Approximate elevation	Accommodation	Reservation authority	Remarks
Jogindernagar	—	3,880 ft.	Himachal Pradesh, P.W.D. Rest House & Electricity Branch Rest House	Executive Engineer, P.W.D. Mandi, Resident Engineer, P.W.D. Electricity Branch House, Jogindernagar	

Drang	36	4,000 ft.	Forest Rest House	Divisional Forest Officer, Mandi (Himachal Pradesh)
Kataula	12	3,960 ft.	Forest Rest House	Divisional Forest Officer, Mandi (Himachal Pradesh)
Bajaura	27	3,600 ft.	Civil Rest House	Sub-Divisional Officer, Civil Kulu
Kulu	9	4,000 ft.	See Appendix I	See Appendix I

*Note :* (a) The Tourist Bureau at Kulu on receiving applications for assistance in making arrangements for coolies, mules or pony transport, etc., will put tourists in touch with contractors.  
 (b) The date and stage where tourists require transport and the number of coolies and animals should be given in writing well in advance.

## ABRIDGED RULES FOR "BIG GAME" SHOOTING IN KANGRA AND KULU VALLEYS

Big game denotes the following species

English name	Kangra name	Kulu name
Himalayan Ibex	Katrol	Tangrol Tangrol (Spiti) Skin (Lahoul) Kart Korth (M) Bakri (F)
Tahr	Kart Meshi (F)	

The Great Tibetan Sheep or Nyan  
The Blue Wild Sheep or Bharal  
The Himalayan Goat, Antelope or Serew  
Goral

..  
..  
Go  
Pij  
Ban Bakri  
Ghorur  
Choral

Nian  
Miatu  
Yanu, Emu  
Ban Bakri  
Gurrar  
Ghoral

Spotted Deer

Chittal  
Bara Sing Jhank  
Para

..  
..

Hog Deer  
Barking Deer or Muntjao  
Musk Deer

Kakar  
Kastura  
Taansa  
Bina  
Nailgai, Bangai,  
Rauj  
Brahbo  
Lagru

Kakar  
Bina, Kastura  
Raonwi (F)  
Ranwhin (F)  
..

Blue Bull or Nilgai

Brown Bear or Snow Bear

Rotta Bhalu  
Rata Balu  
Bhird  
Brabbu

*Note :* (1) The shooting of big game is prohibited, except under a licence to be granted by the Divisional Forest Officer, for which the following licence fees will be charged :

Kulu ..	..	(a)	Rs. 30 (for animals other than brown bear)
Lahoul ..	..	(b)	Rs. 40 (for one brown bear in addition to other animals)
Spiti ..	..		Rs. 30
Bara Bangahal ..	..		Rs. 30
Chota Bangahal ..	..		Rs. 30
Rest of Kangra ..	..		Rs. 5

(2) Except for the Kangra District, these fees include a deposit of Rs. 10 which will be refunded when the licensee returns his licence, duly completed, to the Divisional Forest Officer.

